

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 A-01 PA-01 PRS-01 SSO-00 FBO-02 SY-05
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5316

E O 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN, APUB, GE
SUBJ: MEDIA COVERAGE EMBASSY OPENING

1. LAST TWO WEEKS HAVE FOCUSED GREATER US MEDIA INTEREST IN MOVE TO NEW CHANCERY AND REQUEST FOR DETAILED COVERAGE. ALL INQUIRIES CHanneled TO PAO AS EMBASSY SPOKESMAN WHO PROVIDING BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS. THREE BRIEFINGS HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE: REUTERS EAST BERLIN-BASED MARK BRAYNE, WHICH WE HAVE SEEN IN INTERNATIONAL HERALD-TRIBUNE, AND NEW YORK TIMES WEST BERLIN-BASED ELLEN LENTZ, WHICH WE HAVE NOT. REUTERS STORY HAS SOME INACCURACIES WHICH WAS SET STRAIGHT IN BRIEFING NYT. THIRD BRIEFING WAS FEB 15 FOR TIME MAGAZINE, WITH PHOTOGRAPHS.

2. ALL THREE WERE PERSISTENT ON TWO MATTERS: RENTAL COSTS OF CHANCERY AND SECURITY PRECAUTIONS, ESPECIALLY RESULTS OF ANY ELECTRONIC SWEEPS. RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON RENTAL COSTS, HAS BEEN THAT THIS WAS NEGOTIATED BY WASHINGTON TEAM SOME TIME AGO AND THAT IN EMBASSY WE HAVE NO PRECISE KNOWLEDGE OF AMOUNT. ALL THREE BRIEFINGS PRODUCED COUNTER-COMMENT BY CORRESPONDENTS THAT THEY AWARE OF ENORMOUS GDR RENTAL DEMANDS ON ALL DIPLOMATS, CONSTITUTING (THEIR TERM) "RIPOFF."

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3. ON SECURITY, AND CONFRONTED BY BLUNT QUESTION -
"FOR INSTANCE, HOW MANY BUGS HAVE YOU ALREADY FOUND?" -
CORRESPONDENTS ARE BEING TOLD THESE ARE NOT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION BUT THAT EMBASSY IS TAKING PRECAUTIONS NORMAL TO ALL US EMBASSIES.

4. TIME PHOTOGRAPHER AND STRINGER FROM WEST BERLIN WERE

BRIEFED AND TOOK PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHARGE AND SOME STAFF IN FRONT OF CHANCERY JUST AS NEW VIKING AND CARTER CABINET EXHIBITS FROM RPO WERE BEING MOUNTED IN WINDOW DISPLAY BOXES ON EITHER SIDE CHANCERY ENTRANCE. SMALL CROWD GDR CITIZENS GATHERED IMMEDIATELY. INSIDE OF LOBBY WITH MARINE ALSO PHOTOGRAPHEZTM

5. SECOND GERMAN TV-EAST BERLIN, NBC-TV-WEST BERLIN AND ABC-TV - PARIS HAVE REQUESTED PERMISSION DO FILM COVERAGE EMBASSY AND ALSO FEBRUARY 28 OPENING CEREMONY. WE HAVE NO PROBLEM ALLOWING THEM TO MAKE SOME FILM COVERAGE OF EXTERIOR OF BUILDING AND FIRST FLOOR AREA, WHICH NOW CONTAINS "LIFE, LIBERTY, PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS" EXHIBIT IN LIBRARY. WE INTEND TO TELL THEM, HOWEVER, THAT NATURE OF OPENING, SPACE AVAILABLE FOR GUESTS, AND SIZE OF RECEPTION ARE SUCH THAT TV COVERAGE, INVOLVING EQUIPMENT AND LIGHTS, WOULD CAUSE CONGESTION AND DISTRACTION. THERE, WE PLAN TO REQUEST THAT ANY COVERAGE BE LIMITED TO OUTSIDE OF BUILDING.

6. WE THINK IT APPROPRIATE TO HAVE AGREED PRESS GUIDANCE ON SUBJECTS THAT MIGHT BE RAISED BY CORRESPONDENTS HERE OR CONCEIVABLY IN WASHINGTON. RESPONSES WOULD BE ONLY ON AN IF ASKED BASIS. IN CONNECTION WITH QUESTIONS THAT MAY DEVELOP ALONG THE LINES OF THE REUTERS ARTICLE, WE WOULD PROPOSE ANSWERING QUESTIONS RELATING TO RENOVATION COSTS AND RENTS AS FOLLOWS: RENOVATION COSTS WERE WORKED OUT AND AGREED TO BY APPROPRIATE GDR AUTHORITIES AND A TEAM OF STATE DEPT. OFFICIALS FROM WASHINGTON. RENT FOR THE CHANCERY WAS ALSO WORKED OUT AND AGREED TO BETWEEN THE STATE DEPT. AND APPROPRIATE GDR AUTHORITIES. AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, THE CONFIDENTIAL

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RENT IS BASED ON RATES FIXED BY THE GDR FOR SPACE, OCCUPIED BY FOREIGN REPRESENTATIONS, DEPENDING ON LOCATION, USABLE SPACE, ETC. SINCE THESE WERE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS ON A MATTER NORMALLY KEPT PRIVATE, WE DO NOT THINK IT APPROPRIATE TO GIVE SPECIFIC AMOUNTS. IF PRESSED, HOWEVER, WE WOULD SAY THAT THE ANNUAL RENT AMOUNTS TO \$390,000. NOTING BY COMPARISON THE AMOUNTS REPORTEDLY PAID BY THE GDR IN WASHINGTON FOR THE APT BUILDING IN ARLINGTON, ADDING WE DO NOT KNOW THE RENT FOR THEIR CHANCERY.

7. ON THE MATTER OF "SUMPTUOUSNESS" AND "LAVISHNESS", WE WOULD PROPOSE TO SAY THAT THE CHANCERY IS ATTRACTIVELY FINISHED, SERVES OUR NEEDS WELL, AND WOULD NOT CHARACTERIZE IT IN ANY WAY AS "LAVISH" OR "SUMPTUOUS". WITH RESPECT TO POLITICAL MOTIVATION, WE WOULD SAY THAT BASED ON FACILITIES GDR SHOWED US, WE SELECTED BUILDING WE THOUGH WOULD SERVE OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS, AND THAT QUESTION OF ALLEGED POLITICAL MOTIVATION ON PART OF GDR SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO GDR.

8. SHOULD WE BE ASKED WHETHER CHANCERY IN EAST BERLIN IS NOT IN-CONSISTENT WITH USG POSITION ON GREATER BERLIN, WE WOULD PROPOSE TO SAY THAT WE HAVE MADE OUR POSITION ON BERLIN MATTERS CLEAR, THAT WE ARE EMBASSY TO THE GDR, AND FOR THAT FOR PURPOSE OF CARRYING ON RELATIONS WE ARE IN EAST BERLIN, BUT DO NOT ACCEPT THEIR CONTENTION THAT IT IS CAPITAL OF THE GDR.

9. WE WILL BE SENDING SHORTLY PROPOSED TEXT OF BRIEF REMARKS TO BE MADE BY CHARGE AT RECEPTION FOR DEPT. COMMENTS AND APPROVAL.
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Message Attributes

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